

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WIND SYMPHONY

STEPHEN CHENETTE, CONDUCTOR

MACMILLAN THEATRE

3 P.M.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 1981

PROGRAM

Canzon Trigesimaquinta a 16 (1608)
for four brass groups

TIBURTIO MASSAINO

Overture (1794)

FRANÇOIS DEVIENNE

Commemoration Symphony (1815)
for three bands

ANTON REICHA

- I Adagio; Allegro, un poco presto
- II Adagio (theme and variations)
- III Poco Presto
- IV Marche Funèbre; Maestoso un poco adagio

INTERMISSION

The Continental Harp and Band Report (1975)

ERIC STOKES

An American Miscellany

First Performance in Canada

- I Brooklyn Bridge
- II Cindy
- III Contrapunctus (a 4 voci) No Deposit--No Return
- IV Toccata (Capt. John Smith, His Tucket)
- V Watergate Galop
- VI Contrapunctus (a tutti voci) A Shopping Center Xmas Eve
- VII Contrapunctus (a voci interrotti)
Revolution, American Birth-Wright
- VIII Contrapunctus (a 14 voci)
Off Paumanok, the Jacob's Ladders
- IX The Triumph of Time

Assistant conductors: Jeffry Mason and Jerzy Cichocki

Mime: Danny Ackler

Organ courtesy of Holy Blossom Temple

Antique cash register courtesy of NCR Canada Ltd.

This program traces the development of the "band", which has been defined as "an orchestral group composed principally of wind instruments," from the simplicity of the seventeenth century to the complexity of the twentieth. In the seventeenth century, there was

little standardization of instrumentation of bands, and they were usually quite small. A grouping of wind instruments in pairs became common in the eighteenth century, and this is heard in the Overture by Devienne.

The nineteenth century was a period of expansion and experimentation in wind instruments themselves, and in their use in ensembles. The Commemoration Symphony, by Anton Reicha, was strikingly innovative, however, even for this period. The composer scored the work for 3 piccolos, 6 oboes, 6 clarinets, 6 horns, 6 bassoons, 6 trumpets, 3 double-basses, 6 army drums, and four cannons. It is being performed on this concert in a rescoring for modern band by David Whitwell. The compositions on the first half of this concert are made available by the Wind Instruments New Dawn Society (W.I.N.D.S.), a non-profit organization which promotes and publishes early music for bands.

A standard concert band instrumentation has evolved in the twentieth century, but, in The Continental Harp and Band Report, composer Eric Stokes goes far beyond this in variety of tonal colour by the use of many unusual instruments.

The sixteenth century Augustinian monk Tiburtio Massaino travelled widely throughout Europe, where as maestro di cappella he held posts in Salo, Prague, Salzburg, Cremona, Piacenza, and Lodi. He composed sacred and secular vocal music, and two instrumental canzonas (published 1608), one for eight instrumental voices, the other for sixteen voices in four "choirs". Its varied, short phrases offer lively antiphonal possibilities and differing combinations for the four choirs.

The short French Overture by Devienne, with its brief Largo and lively Allegro, reflects the ongoing transition from Baroque to Classic style. It is characterized here by its employment of sudden, dramatic dynamic changes, and the appearance in closely-related keys of the Allegro's broken chord theme undergoing limited transformation. François Devienne (1759-1803) served as a French regimental bandsman, and earned a reputation not only as a popular Parisian composer of both instrumental and operatic music, but as a virtuoso on the flute and bassoon. The part for the obsolete bass instrument, the serpent, is played on this concert by a muted tuba.

Antonin Reicha (1770-1836) was forced to leave his native Prague as his family became impoverished when his father died, to live with

his grandfather. Later, he was taught by an uncle who was a Bavarian court musician, and by whom Reicha was employed. Thereafter he began to establish himself as a composer, in Hamburg, Vienna, and finally, Paris, to whose conservatoire he was appointed composition professor in 1818. The political and military events of the Napoleonic period doubtless occasioned his "Commemoration Symphony". This was written for performance out of doors, with the three bands and field drums widely spaced, cannons (replaced on this concert by percussion instruments) out of the sight of the audience, and an optional manoeuvring infantry regiment in the Marche Funèbre. Bands two and three are used for tonal reinforcement, rather than antiphonally, as in Massaino.

For the first movement, the ascription is "the memory of great exploits." An Adagio in the dominant for "the death of heroes and great men" offers a theme and three variations. The first variation features a drum-roll ostinato while the second introduces firing cannons. The third movement, Poco Presto, "to celebrate any important future event," somewhat resembles the first, by its frequent repetitions of short sectional material, and eventual return to the tonic key. A short funeral march, replete with drums and cannon-fire brings this programmatic oddity to a stately end.

The Minnesota Orchestra chose to mark the inauguration of their Orchestra Hall in 1976 by commissioning University of Minnesota professor Eric Stokes to compose a work for winds and percussion, and The Continental Harp and Band Report was the result. Musical America called it "one of the damndest conglomerations of things and stuff ever assembled...a work of lively fantasy and humour, poetic evocation, rich imagery, and freewheeling exuberance." In it, the composer, according to the Minneapolis Star, "mixes--or sometimes merely juxtaposes--an astounding array of musical, quasi-musical and non-musical effects."

Stokes adapts the compositional and instrumental techniques of the traditional European symphonic wind ensemble to the American context, seemingly inspired by the satire and ironic wit of Charles Ives, while the title parodies the style of early American musical publications. A strange assortment of the unusual is called for, including such instruments as the alto flute, piccolo and bass trumpets, trap set, ratchet, guiro, electronic organ, and celesta. If the proverbial kitchen sink was forgotten, the common washboard was not.

The written word is an essential ingredient in Stokes' music. The score of The Continental Harp and Band Report is headed with the following excerpt from Hart Crane:

O harp and altar, of the fury fused,
(How could mere toil align thy choiring strings!)

The composer adds this preface to the score:

This is a book of nine compositions for winds, brass, keyboard and percussion. "Continental" refers to early American prototypes, "Harp" is both sacred and profane, and the "Band Report" is addressed to the people.

The title would thus appear to be a broad play on words. The artist uses a harp and "band" to "harp" on various aspects of Americana; the result is as sharp and stinging as the "report" of a Continental musket. It is not only a play on words, but also a play on music. Stokes was intrigued with the idea of writing an entire piece for winds and percussion:

"It offered an opportunity to turn the manner and skills of the symphonic wind ensemble (essentially European in their traditions and basic repertory) to the service of a thoroughly American impulse. With that in mind, I determined to write in the spirit of those early American 'Miscellanies', 'Songsters', 'Minstrels', 'Harmonys' and 'Tunebooks' that constitute such an important part of our musical tradition."

The score to the first movement, Brooklyn Bridge, has the line from Hart Crane's poem of the same name: "And we have seen night lifted in thine arms." This is a tone poem, with intricate acoustical experiments that paint the famous bridge in an eerie half-light. At times, some instruments play in a tempo independent of the conductor, others are bending notes up and down in quarter tones, and footsteps on the bridge are heard.

"Cindy" is a rollicking setting of the Southern mountain tune, in which both polytonality and imitation are used.

The preface to "No Deposit--No Return" states:

On the first principle that each voice proceeds in a meter and tempo independent of the others, and
On the second, that, in front rank, shoulder to shoulder
strength sing out all tunes

Thus, the voices of the people at the contrapuntal barricades.

This movement is a comment on the clutter of our "throw-away" society, and the band is divided into four ensembles, each with its own meter and tempo. Stokes writes, "Those who may find this order of

counterpoint too boisterous and contentious should pass it by, but what would football be without its scrimmage? The score ends with the words, "May it rust in peace."

Toccata. Captain John Smith, His Tucket. The Italian words "toccare" means "to touch", and this section provides a literal translation, since all the instruments are "played" by touching. "Tucket," Stokes reminds us, "was a sixteenth-century form of the Italian 'Toccata'." Capt. Smith's adventurings in Virginia left their Elizabethan marks on that infant colony." The conductor is given a demanding solo at the movement's conclusion.

Watergate Galop. The galop, Stokes recalls, was a rapid dance "executed with many changes of steps and with hopping movements," and when The Star Spangled Banner is painfully distorted at the end, the listener cannot be sure what is "operational" any longer. A Shopping Center Xmas Eve. This may be viewed both as a fantasia for pantomime and orchestra, or as a brief concerto for cash register and orchestra. Against a conglomeration of bells and tunes (mostly relating to Christmas, but also including the theme from the CBS evening news), a mime plays an increasingly frustrated salesclerk. The movement ends sounding like a broken record, and takes, according to Stokes, "a small step in music's progress toward a state of theatre."

Revolution, American Birth-Wright: A Bicentennial Meditation, has the preface, "On the principle that a remembered melody is silent music." An organ muses on the national anthem. Snatches of Americana erupt suddenly in this whimsical and troubled movement.

Off Paumanok: The Jacob's Ladders, has the preface:

On the first principle, that antinomies hold

a special resonance one with the other, and

On the second, that a ladder's true scale

lies in the ratios of rungs to poles, and

On the third, that depth is height translated.

The incredible sonorities of this section do seem to scale new rungs of sound, particularly with its unusual combination of instruments. At one point, all of the members of the ensemble are in tempi independent of the conductor.

The Triumph of Time. This complex and majestic finale, inspired by an engraving of the same title by Peter Breugel, is an antiphonal tone poem of imposing proportions. It is significant that Stokes directs that "these pieces may be performed singly or in groups,

and in almost any order, with the one exception that The Triumph of Time must always be the final movement when it is included in any selection." A noble and imposing introduction is interrupted by a collage of athletic "fight" songs (Cheer, Cheer for Old Notre Dame, for example) and political tunes. This hodgepodge is stopped by a bass trumpet in the distance, gradually coming closer, but some elements of frivolity still break out. A massive and intricate structure of sound (representing modern society?) still with signals from the bass trumpet, finally descends, through a quintet of bassoons and bass clarinet, into a primitive state in which the birds and animals have their say. In an aleatoric section, instruments represent doves, frogs, tomcats and scarecrows, plants and frogs, starlings and woodpeckers, catbirds and robins, sparrows and nuthatches, larks, and sparrows and warblers. The trumpets again make their mysterious statement in the distance, and the movement comes to an eerie close.

Eric Stokes was born in 1930, and holds degrees from Lawrence College, the New England Conservatory, and the University of Minnesota (PhD). Nature has always had a profound effect on Stokes' art, and he counts among the most significant influences of his life "the unscheduled spectacular multi-media performances of summer thunderstorms of his native New Jersey which...taught him so much about style and idea."

For the program notes to the first performance, Stokes provided this conclusion:

Behold the sky.

It is audience.

"The wind conducts.

Canoe and water play.

Others, insects even,

sound the endless fusing

of the world's wide fray."

Program notes: Marshall A. Portnoy (Record jacket notes for The Continental Harp and Band Report)
Barry Waterlow
Stephen Chenette

Next Concert: Haydn/Shostakovich Series, Program 2, January 25, 1981
Walter Hall, 8 p.m.

Next Wind Symphony Concert: Sunday, March 29, 1981, 3 p.m.
MacMillan Theatre

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WIND SYMPHONY PERSONNEL 1981

Flute

Lucie Batteke, Ottawa
Shelley Brown, Peterborough
Patricia Creighton, Kitchener
Joanne Geerling, Toronto
Ross Pearson, Hamilton
Marina Piccinini, St. John's
Elizabeth Rutter, Mississauga
Rosanne Spinazze, Sault St. Marie

Oboe

Martin Houtman, Kingston
Hamish Gordon, Ottawa
John Miles, Toronto
Mary Smith, Thunder Bay
Peter Voisey, Ottawa

Clarinet

Frank Boccitto, Toronto
Katherine Carleton, Peterborough
Frances Cohen, Montreal
Jason Hall, Sackville, N.B.
Margaret Isaacs, Winnipeg
Terry Kowalczyk, Toronto
Joseph Orlowski, Montreal
Jeffrey Reilly, Toronto
Scott Whittington, Midland

Bassoon

Heather Chesley, Saint John
Margaret Hooper, Toronto
Peter Lutek, Burlington
Alan Stauss, Alexandria, Virginia

Saxophone

Jean Ducharme, Beloeil, P.Q.
Wendy Rothwell, Toronto
Les Sabina, Windsor
Glenn Schofield, Don Mills

Trumpet

Sandra Chapman, Toronto
Frances Harvey, Kettleby, Ont.

Mark Hopkins, Scarborough
Anita McAlister, Campbellville
James Rolfe, Ottawa
Holly Shephard, Truro, N.S.
Michael White, Vancouver

Bass Trumpet

Roman Yasinsky, Toronto

Horn

Rita Arendz, Middleton, N.S.
Margaret Howard, Calgary
Dave Murrell, Winnipeg
Roy Takayesu, Hamilton
Tom Wade West, Knowlton, P.Q.

Trombone

Tim Cunningham, Toronto
Greg Farrugia, Toronto
Kathryn Macintosh, Fredericton
Karen Maxwell, Scarborough
Ken Read, Kirkland Lake
John Wilson, Bowmanville

Euphonium

Ken Hudson, Kenora

Tuba

Douglas Burrell, Montreal
Sal Fratia, Toronto

Harp

Elva Mikk, Penn Yan, N.Y.

Piano/Organ/Celeste

Bruce Blandford, Amherst, N.S.

Percussion

Mark J. Duggan, Halifax
Peter Gallant, Summerside, P.E.I.
Stephen Li, Toronto
Rob Pearce, Victoria, B.C.
David Tomlinson, Toronto

Librarian & Manager: Roman Yasinsky